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FINE ARTS EXHIBITION AT PHILADELPHIA

In its seventy-third annual exhibition, recently opened at Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts has, without doubt, broken its own record for excellence. To those familiar with current art exhibitions this statement will mean much, since the Academy has long enjoyed the unique distinction of being second to no institution of its kind in America in the comprehensiveness and character of its shows, especially as regards native work.

The reason for this high rank is not far to seek.

In no other art institution in the country, perhaps, are the exhibitions so thoroughly dominated by one man, whose enterprise, energy, and judgment are directed to the one end of securing works representative of the best native talent. It is an old maxim that everybody's business is nobody's business, and Harrison S. Morris, the managing director of the Academy, has not been willing to leave the annual exhibitions of the institution to the tender graces of chance—to the whims of artists or agents, or to the apathy or ill-advised enterprise of the owners of available canvases.



PORTRAIT OF ARCHBISHOP ELDER OF CINCINNATI
By Thomas Eakins

He has been wont to visit studios, attend exhibitions in other art centers, solicit favors from private collectors and dealers, and to make use of every legitimate influence in the acquisition of such works as he thought ought to be presented. This is not saying that he has been accustomed to usurp the place and perform the function of juries of acceptance; but it is saying that the good selective judgment and the judicious solicitation of one man can and do materially change



PORTRAIT OF EDWARD STEICHEN
By William M. Chase

the complexion of the collections submitted to the selecting juries.

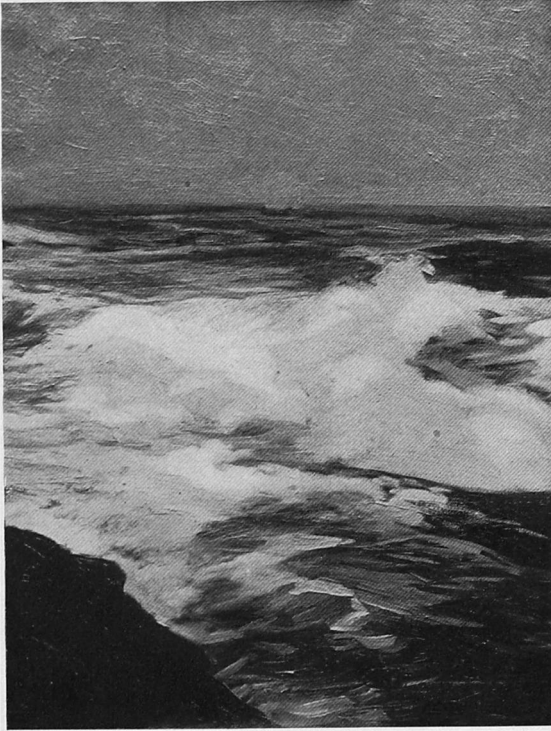
In the present case the show comprises something over nine hundred exhibits, six hundred and sixty-two being oil paintings. One hundred and six pieces of sculpture and about two dozen miniatures are shown; but no water-colors, drawings, or works in black-and-white have been admitted. This restriction as to media has been a wise one, and has worked for the betterment of the display. Great care has been taken in the hanging, so that the walls present a dignified, harmonious, and unusually attractive arrangement.

As in former years—and, indeed, in keeping with the usual characteristics of American exhibitions—portraits and landscapes are in the ascendant. Many of these have come direct from the studios of the artists and have never before been exhibited; no inconsiderable number are canvases that have been shown elsewhere, and are hence comparatively familiar to the art-loving public; other pictures have been brought from private homes, where in many instances they have

for years been barred to all save the chosen few who have enjoyed the privilege of viewing them. These latter canvases are a pleasing feature, since they afford the opportunity of comparing the best efforts of present-day artists with the work of the same or other men a decade or two ago. Of course there was no conscious intention of

making a retrospective exhibition, but nevertheless the presence of these older canvases has something of that effect.

One characteristic of the exhibition is worthy of note: Scant space is given to the faddists, and new movements are conspicuous by their absence. As a consequence the personal note in the canvases shown is very marked, each artist apparently having aimed to present an individual interpretation in straightforward rendering. As might naturally be ex-



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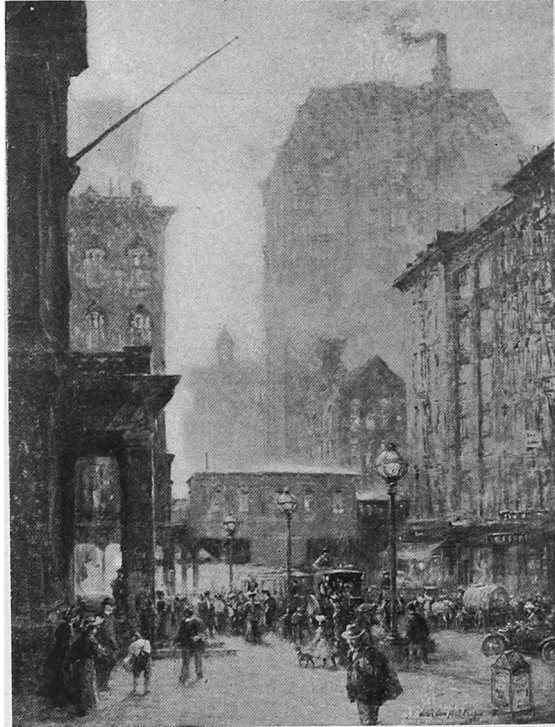
By Edward W. Redfield

pected there is in the work of many exhibitors noticeable variations in theme, and differences of treatment from those observable on former occasions; but these in most cases are of the sort that are indicative of legitimate growth and development, and are not to be regarded as witnesses of a senseless striving for novel effects or an ill-advised adoption of fleeting vogues. It must be admitted that with one or two conspicuous exceptions no canvases of unusual importance are offered; and on the other hand it should be stated that

comparatively few pictures are shown that fall to the level of mediocrity. High average excellence rules, and it should be remembered that it is the average standard and not the exceptional canvas or two that determines the interest and importance of the collection shown.

Conspicuous among the exceptional works must be named the canvases shown by John S. Sargent, especially his magnificent picture of "The Misses Hunter," which was this artist's success at the last exhibition of the London Academy, and which is destined, according to the announcement of the Hunter family, to find lodgment ultimately in the National Gallery, among that institution's galaxy of masterpieces. There is small need here to dwell upon the transcendent merits and the consequent rank of Mr. Sargent as a portraitist. The world long

since recognized his sterling qualities, and has been willing to pay homage to him for his wonderful technical dexterity, for his unusual skill in rendering textures, for his power to record that indefinable something that makes a portrait something more than a mere register of face and form, and for the style, so peculiarly his own, which marks everything he does. The nine examples of Sargent's work shown include, among others, portraits of Mrs. Joseph Widener, Mrs. White, General Wood, Mr. Widener, and Mr. Robin-



SKYSCRAPERS, RANDOLPH STREET, CHICAGO

By Colin C. Cooper



THE MISSES HUNTER
By John Singer Sargent

may not here be deemed out of place.

The sisters are depicted in evening gowns, half reclining on a round drawing-room seat in a room indicative of generous culture and refinement. The two to the right of the canvas are clad in black, and the one to the left in white—an arrangement cleverly designed to break the impression of formal symmetry as regards the disposition of color. The

son, all of which have been exhibited elsewhere, and several of which have been commented upon in former issues of BRUSH AND PENCIL. This, however, is the first occasion on which "The Misses Hunter," which is undoubtedly Sargent's masterpiece, has been shown in this country. A word, therefore, of description



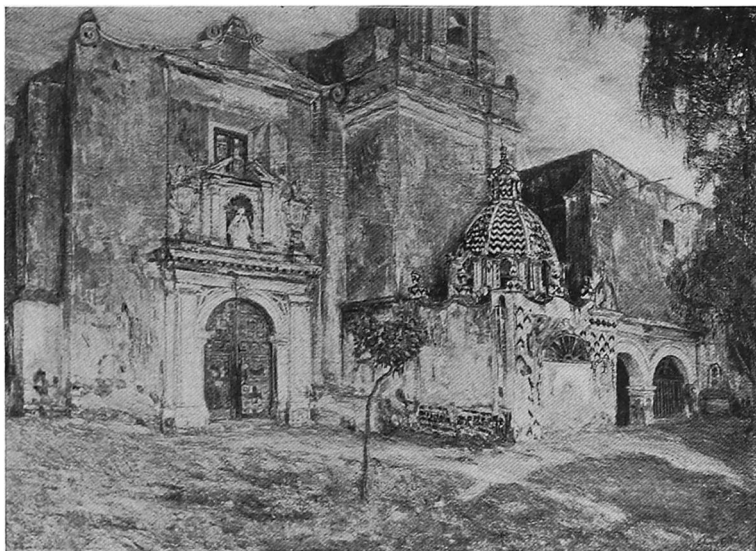
IN THE BIGOUDINE COUNTRY
By Elizabeth Nourse

composition is admirably balanced, and the accessories are sumptuous, but in perfect taste. The figures are posed in their natural habitat—there is no obtrusive ostentation, no suggestion of costuming for a purpose. The rich habiliments, the texture of which is so wonderfully depicted, befit the wearers—and apparently also befit a woolly little dog that has pre-empted the skirt of the middle figure and sprawls at full length with the air of a pet accustomed to take liberties. The arms of two of the sisters are familiarly locked, indicative of the kindly relations existing between the sitters. The deft use of a handsome screen, which constitutes most of the background, precludes the necessity of architectural details, but tells by implication the elegant character of the apartment. The sisters are all in the bloom and beauty of youth, and the artist has caught with marvelous power the distinctive elements of charm in each face and form. In a word, the canvas is something more than three portraits—it is a bit of ideal, luxurious home life, showing the glory of womanhood that is fostered and preserved by well-used opulence. There is small wonder that the picture caused little less than a sensation when first exhibited at the London Academy, and that the family has been importuned ever since for the privilege of showing it at exhibitions. It is a canvas which, once seen, will long be remembered, and this fact alone is one of the best witnesses to its transcendent qualities.



MEMORIES
By John W. Alexander

Among the other notable canvases in the exhibition should be mentioned Winslow Homer's "Eight Bells," a couple of early landscapes by John La Farge, a little group of Whistlers, and, among works of recent production, five pictures representing the art of William M. Chase, three portraits by Cecilia Beaux, and a group of French interiors by Walter Gay. Homer's wonderful canvas is too well known from frequent description to need a word of comment



SANTA MARIA DE LOS ANGELES DE CHERUBUSCO
By Edward F. Rook

here. Suffice it to say that it is one of the masterpieces of American painting. La Farge's canvases, painted upward of forty years ago at Newport, are charming in tone, and are among the most interesting works by this serious and gifted painter. The Whistler group, comprising three portraits and a sketch of a little girl of the streets, is somewhat disappointing. They are strictly after this master's usual method, but in declaring them to be characteristic one says about all that need be said of them. One looks in vain in them for evidence of the artist's remarkable abilities or for a promise even of the unprecedented fame he acquired. The little tot of the streets, sketch though it be, is to me the most interesting of the lot.

Two of Chase's canvases are thoroughly good examples of portraiture, a third is "Old Dutch Houses of Haarlem," and the remaining

two are still-life pictures. As a painter of still-life Chase has no superior in America, and these two examples shown are fully as good as anything that has emanated from his studio. In his French interiors Mr. Gay, a member of the American art colony in Paris, has manifestly eclipsed his more serious and more finished canvases. Of the four little canvases exhibited one is especially notable, "The Château de la Rochette." This depicts a room paneled in white



SHEEP-SHEARING
By Horatio Walker

wood, with a fireplace in the middle and a tapestried chair on either side. The little work is exceptional, both in taste and beauty, and its excellence is doubtless due to the fact that it is strictly a product of "art for art's sake."

Cecilia Beaux perhaps has never been seen to better advantage than in her two portraits here displayed. That of Richard Watson Gilder, which was reproduced in this magazine when the picture was exhibited at Pittsburg, has the merit of being an exceptionally good likeness, and her portrait of a seated woman, technically speaking, is one of the cleverest things she has done. Interest centers, however, on her remarkably dainty and striking likeness of a child, which in pose and color scheme and in its air of genuine child life is one of the happiest-conceived and best-executed works in the collection. Akin



PORTRAIT
By Cecilia Beaux



WAITING
By Louise Cox

to this, and perhaps second to it only, is Louise Cox's portrait of a girl in pink, which bears the catalogue name of "Waiting." The girl is represented as sitting on a bench beside a flower-pot. This is an interesting and important example of straightforward portraiture.

The work of three other women artists shown here is fully up to the standard of former efforts: Elizabeth Nourse sends a canvas, "In the Bigoudine Country," which is nothing less than masculine in its firmness and strength of touch; Adelaide Cole Chase offers a somewhat ambitious group of two little children in white, which is an eminently natural and effective bit of painting; and Mary Cassatt in her successful group depicting a mother and her two children, is decidedly more personal and hence more interesting than she has been on many a former occasion. She apparently for the time forgot or renounced her French impressionism, and despite certain faults which

it would be easy to point out, she appears to better advantage than she has done in some recent exhibitions that have been given by her.

Among other portraitists whose work deserves mention—and in many instances enthusiastic commendation—is Wilton Lockwood, Abbott H. Thayer, Thomas Dewing, John W. Alexander, Joseph De Camps, Thomas Eakins, Robert Vonnoh, Sargent Kendall, Robert Henri, Alfred Q. Collins, Janet Wheeler, Adolphe Borie,



CONSTANCE AND GURDON WORCESTER
By Adelaide Cole Chase

Carroll Beckwith, John McLure Hamilton, Frank Benson, Frank D. Millet, and Prince Troubetzkoy. Mr. Lockwood's work is unusually good in draftsmanship and color, but like many of his former performances his canvases this year are marked, and possibly even more so than in former years, by a certain indefiniteness that, to say the least, is somewhat annoying. Mr. Alexander's five canvases are all after



PORTRAIT OF HOUSTON WOODWARD

By Janet Wheeler

his usual manner; that is, he has essayed in all of them a decorative treatment that makes of them rather figure studies than formal portraits, and leaves them lacking in the convincing qualities of legitimate portraiture. Mr. Dewing's two panels, that of Mrs. Stanford White and that of Mrs. Devereux Emmett, are both early works and are hence familiar from former exhibitions, but the fact that he has never done anything better is sufficient war-

rant for their presence in the galleries. An old friend, provided it is sufficiently meritorious, is always welcome in a current art exhibition. Mr. Borie's painting of a young lady with her face resting on her hand, has all the charm of womanhood and has the further interest of being a serious and most effective bit of painting. Prince Troubetzkoy's contribution is a portrait of his wife, well known in literature as Amélie Rives, and is a work which discloses much fine sentiment. Mr. Thayer's "Portrait of a Woman" is somewhat disappointing in comparison with much of the work this artist has here-

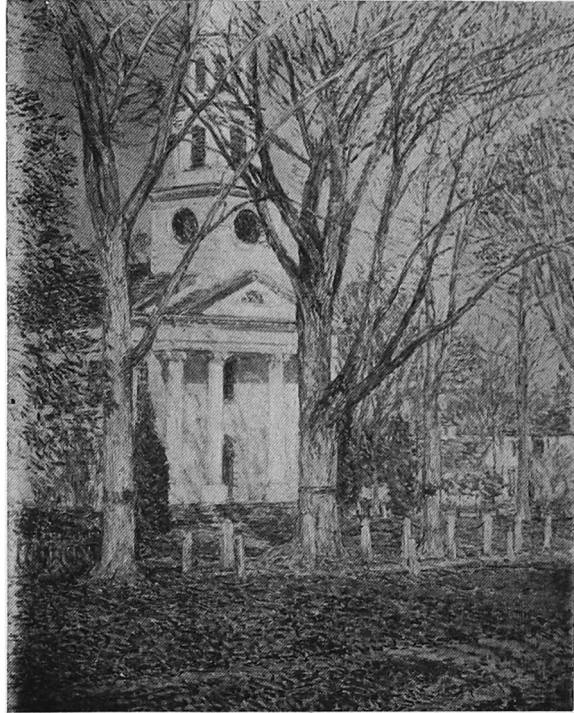
tofore exhibited. A pleasant word may also be said of the portrait work of Robert D. Gauley, Frank Fowler, William H. Hyde, John H. Niemeyer, John F. Weir, and John Lambert.

Few of the landscape painters whose names are familiar to the art-loving public are missing from this exhibition. Most of these artists give evidence, if not of positive advancement in their art, at least of maintaining their work on the high level of their former achievements. For the most part, the landscapes are straightforward bits of interpretative painting, and there is variety enough of theme and method to make the collection of exceptional interest.

Among the best known and ablest contributors of landscapes and marines one may

mention Childe Hassam, W. Elmer Scho-

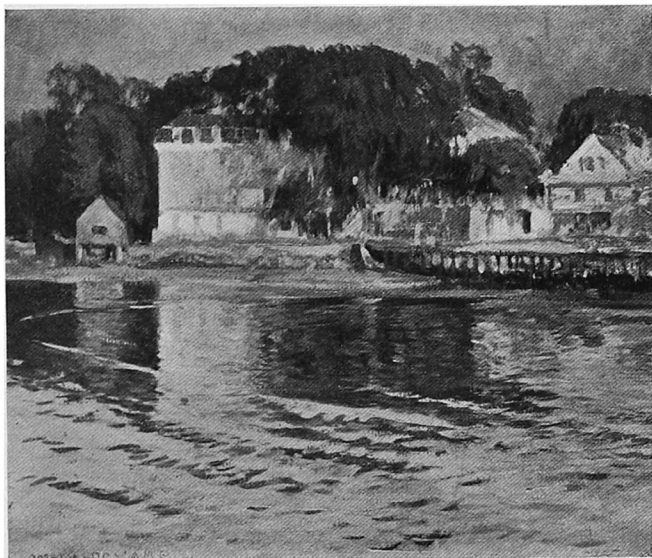
field, Charles Morris Young, Edward W. Redfield, Henry W. Ranger, D. W. Tryon, Walter Clark, Birge Harrison, Bruce Crane, Ben Foster, Charles Warren Eaton, Charles Melville Dewey, Arthur Hoeber, George Inness, Jr., Charles P. Gruppe, Leonard Ochtman, Emil Carlsen, F. De Haven, Walter L. Palmer, Alexander Harrison, William T. Richards, Reynolds Beal, Gifford Beal, Carlton T. Chapman, Van Deering Perrine, Charles H. Frometh, and W. L. Lathrop. Many of these men are seen at their very best, and not a few of the less known artists have contributed canvases which are eminently



THE CHURCH OF OLD LYME, CONNECTICUT
By Childe Hassam

creditable and which may be taken as a thoroughly satisfactory promise of future performances, which is a most satisfactory indication.

On the other hand a few of the exhibitors have scarcely fulfilled the expectation entertained of them. Alexander Harrison's canvases, for instance, lack much of the spirit of former exhibits; William M. Paxton descends almost to the level of sentimentality in his "The Bride," who is depicted as kissing her wedding ring in a mawkish way; Hugh Breckenridge, in his "The Shell: Autumn Evening," is



THE LITTLE HOTEL
By Joseph De Camp

rather kaleidoscopic or prismatic in his coloring than convincing in his interpretation; Henry O. Tanner this year is decidedly below former standards, his "Peter After the Denial" being little more than a sketch and almost wholly lacking in the convincing qualities that have made many of his former pictures so notable; and Gari Melchers's "Bride" depicts a peasant girl, either too grossly conceived or too frankly painted to elicit our sympathies and interest.

The sculpture of the exhibition consists chiefly of busts, small groups, and statuettes. Saint Gaudens's medallion portrait, "Mrs. John C. Gray," is one of the most notable works. Conspicuous in the rotunda are eleven pieces by A. Phemister Proctor and ten by Samuel Murray.

ARTHUR Z. BATEMAN.